

KINSHIP TENDING SKILLS:

How You Can Contribute to a Culture of Belonging
Festival & Gatherings Edition, Part 1

Presented by

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In collaboration with
**THE
COLLECTIVITY
PROJECT**

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Presenters

All are part of Stellar Village

Aaron Johnson

Grief to Action & Holistic Resistance

Alyx Somas

The Collectivity Project

Grisha Stewart

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Sabrina Simon

Foundation for Intentional Community

Sheniqua Trotman

Elevated Expression

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Collaborators

Panelists

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Interviews & Other Support

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Course Overview

- Part 1 (today)
- Part 2 (June 11)
 - Facilitators/Workshop Leaders/performers
 - Logistical Crews (Facilities/Kitchen)
 - Venue Hosts / Land Stewards
 - Event Planner/Coordinators/Registrars
- Course player will have these videos in bite-sized chunks

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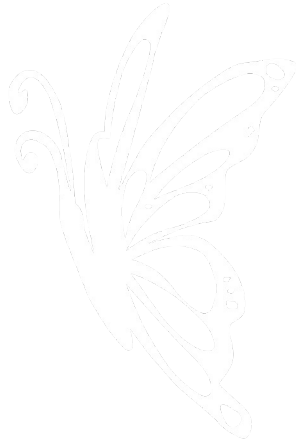
Agenda

Intro:

- Grounding
- Song
- What is Kinship Tending?

Exploring through the lenses of:

- All Participants
- Kinship Tending Team
- Kinship Tending Team Coordinators



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Thank you to the indigenous cultures
who have been tending the earth as kin for millenia

Action:

Read this article by indigenous
writers at [CulturalSurvival.org](https://culturalsurvival.org)

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Resilience Rising: Indigenous
Wisdom in Disaster Response
and Climate Crisis Management



Link will be in the course player

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Community Singing is great for

~~belonging!~~
~~belonging!~~

to sing or hum or mumble along

Please stay on mute
because Zoom timing is glitchy

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Kinship

A rooted feeling of closeness, of being 'family,' a
shared sense of responsibility for well-being

Individualism is an oppressive myth.
We are not only kin with our biological family,
but all humans – in fact, All Beings!

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What does belonging feel like for you
– in your mind, as well as your body?
What has been done to help you feel that?

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Kinship Tending

An ongoing, intentional practice of supporting thriving for all beings in our sphere of influence

- Our nervous systems are interwoven. Breathing deeply, sharing regulation skills, teaching songs, checking in, listening with your whole body, consent, hugs, etc.
- Sow seeds of connection. Make it easier for folks to be known and bring their gifts to community
- Facilitate social learning to promote joy and reduce harm. Attunement, reciprocity, conflict as a growth tool, and collaborate on the evolution of norms

(Adaptive Attachment – Gaskins, et., al 2017, Keller, 2021)

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Kinship Culture Examples

- Offering help for things that take work
- Bringing extra snacks
- Repairing conflict
- Asking for help not just when you can't do it alone, but when it would be more fun to do together
- Resting
- Co-creating gatherings with diverse leadership
- Deliberately taking other perspectives to consider thriving

Recommended Reading: “We Belong” by Liz Rog

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What is Belonging?

“Having a meaningful voice and the opportunity to participate in the design of political, social, and cultural structures.”

– john a. powell

Your thriving matters and you are an essential part of co-creating community

inclusion + connection + recognition + agency

Check out the [Othering & Belonging Institute](#) at Berkeley

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Universal Goal: Belonging

- Pretty much everyone has belonging wounds
- Goal: Create experiences of felt belonging (an antidote to the expectation “I don’t belong”)
- “Targeted Universalism”: Collaborate to find universal goals all groups can agree on AND targeted interventions
 - Every group deserves dignity and to be considered
 - Not experiencing the same roadblocks
 - Groups/individuals need different types & amounts of support

Resource: belonging.berkeley.edu

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"Othering is the process of casting a group, an individual, or an identity as outside the circle of human concern."

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"Othering is a failed strategy to belong."
- john a. powell

Resources: by john a. powell:
"The Power of Bridging: How to Build a World Where We All Belong"
"Belonging without Othering: How We Save Ourselves and the World"

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Breaking

- Sets people against each other
- Says: Us vs. them
- Shuts down others
- Spreads fear and blame
- Ignores nature and connection
- Feels like judgment & separation

Bridging

- Brings people together
- Says: We're all in this
- Welcomes different voices
- Builds trust and care
- Includes Earth and future life
- Feels like belonging & possibility

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Bridging

"Creating relationships and connections across lines of difference while recognizing and respecting those differences."
-john a. powell

Core Ideas in Bridging:

- Acknowledge real differences (e.g., race, class, beliefs)
- Refuse to define identity through exclusion
- Create narratives of mutual care and shared fate
- Commit to repairing relationships and systems

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Collective Liberation -- for All of Us

- All humans are learners
- Thriving systems are generative—rooted in care, purpose, and belonging
- Complexity is strength: We honor diverse ways of living, loving, and contributing
- True change comes from deep connection & shared work across differences
- Liberation is a lifelong journey of growing our capacity to see, feel, and act with deeper awareness

Recommended! *Beyond Inclusion, Beyond Embodiment: A Decolonial Strategy to Liberate Everyone*
by Leticia Nieto with Margot F. Boyer, Liz Goodwin, Garth R. Johnson & Laurel Collier Smith

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Dismantling Numbness & 'Perfection'

- Reassure each other about care & belonging (even in conflict)
- Make mistakes & learn out loud
- Normalize expressing grief, anger, and other emotions
 - Trauma track the effect on others (anger isn't aggression)
 - Kinship Tending team
 - Ritual containers: Community singing, sounding, dancing, grieving, etc.
- Skilled conflict is essential for transformation
- How can gatherings feel safe enough to transform/address the big conflicts in our over-culture?
- How do we collectively grow the capacity to bridge instead of breaking?

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Lens 1: All Participants as Community Members

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Everyone is Part of the Circle of Care

Different and parallel experiences!

- Unique histories, bodies, trauma stories
- Different identities & intersectionality
- Different internal parts of our selves
- Folks with responsibilities for the gathering
 - Also need care
 - May be overstimulated/busy, etc.
- Humans are also not the only beings

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Can Connection Spark if We...

- ...stop trying to look busy?
- ... see people?
- ... learn full names (along with preferred pronouns & names) & where folks are from?
- ... show gratitude?
- ... invite people to sit by us or join in on activities?
- ... ask for help when we need it?
- ... look for ways to give freely?
- ... invite people to share access needs?
- ... show up when we say we will (and circle back if we won't)?
- ... introduce each other?
- ... notice and value small ways to make time? waiting, walking together, sharing a meal, helping out a friend or stranger, stop for spontaneous conversation without a sense of rush

Adapted from Liz Rog's book 'We Belong'

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More on Welcoming

- Be real!
- Thank folks for their 'gifts' to community (skills, time, insights, etc.)
- Reframe envy as admiration
- Introduce your friends to others to help them 'mycelate'
- Clear permission for both YES and NO
 - Look for body language to see if they want more or are done (ex. where is their body facing?)
 - ~~Re-ask~~ if they're comfortable continuing to interact
 - If yes feels like no, ask "are you sure? I'm totally fine with a no."

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Clarity & Trust-Building Needs Vary

Some factors to consider:

- Trauma history around belonging
- Are there specifics for specific lanes of oppression?
- Some folks may need extra clarity (ex. Autism, face-blindedness, new to the culture of the gathering, age, etc.)
 - Whether or not they're included or when a conversation is over
 - Who is invited in a specific cluster of folks?
 - Especially confusing in less formal spaces
- Different identity/culture norms around welcome, touch, etc.

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Food/Body/Hygiene Expectations

- Often on website, can ask or just tune into this once you arrive
- Odors (perfumes and such)
- Food sharing? (potluck, snack potluck, community kitchen, etc.)
- Bring dishes? (blissware)
- Expect to wash your dishes
- Dress norms, nudity? Track the trauma story for marginalized folks
- Composting toilet? Port-a-potty?
- Cleaning up
 - Expect handwashing stations
 - Showers may or may not be a thing
- Teach unspoken or spoken rules to others without shaming them
- Can ask in advance to inspire a website update

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Taking Care of Yourself

- Keep some focus on how you're doing:
 - Scan your body (for temperature, energy, emotional state, etc.)
 - Learn what wears you out or fills you up
 - Be willing to say no/yes and ask for what you need
- You may have emotions arise
 - Repressed emotions may come up in spaces of deeper trust
 - Parts of you may be waiting for the other shoe to drop
 - Negative experiences may surprise you more
 - Can you be part of a rupture process to grow community? Know your limits
- Reach to Kinship Tenders, other attendees, etc.
- Resilience practices (meditation, singing, walking barefoot, journaling)

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Ways to Co-Regulate

- “Behavioral synchrony”
 - Songs for kinship tending
 - Movement (mirroring, dancing in the same space, etc.)
 - Breathing
 - Laughing
 - Looking in the same direction
 - Sensing the same things in the environment
- Hugs & other touch
- Ask for what you need, like hugs or snuggles or silence (consent)
- Learn the consent norms of the community

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Normalize Rupture & Repair

- Feel - Share - Shift
 - Feel: Internally observe a reaction, energy, or impact
 - Share: Express from your own experience without blame
 - Shift: Move the moment toward growth, clarity, or restoration together.
 - “Something feels off for me—can we turn toward it together?”
 - “I’m feeling a contraction—maybe that’s something worth exploring?”
- Slow down
 - Conflict is a sign of engagement and presence - a place to learn
 - Track your sense of urgency to avoid conflict or resolve quickly
 - Give awkwardness time to turn into tenderness
 - Sanctuary symbol?
 - Be willing to learn out loud

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More About Conflict: Bringing in Others

- Why?
 - Is the intention to break/harm/punish/cancel/gossip...
 - Or pro-social, in service of repair?
 - regulating nervous system
 - being heard
 - perspective shift
 - support & education
- Some conflicts are more systemic & need wider support
- Kinship Tending team has conflict transformation specialists and affinity group educators

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Real Belonging Takes Practice

- Othering wounds us all — by race, body, gender, age, mind, origin, belief.
 - Most of us carry more than one wound
 - Belonging isn't passive — it takes intentional welcome, especially across difference
 - Release conditioned learning
- If you've been marginalized:
 - You belong
 - Your body may expect harm — that's real
 - Also notice safety, welcome, warmth
 - Allow your perspective to develop
- If you hold more privilege:
 - You belong, too
 - Are you making space, or sharing it?
 - Who do you mean by "we"?
 - Pause. Listen. Speak when it matters
 - Risk rejection to connect
 - Allow your perspective to develop

Resource: *Beyond Inclusion, Beyond Exclusion: A Developmental Strategy to Liberate Everyone* by Leticia Nieto with Margot F. Boyer, Liz Goodwin, Garth R. Johnson & Laurel Collier Smith

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How to Help People Feel Welcome

- Acknowledge with brief eye contact, smile, and a nod as you pass
- Go out of your way to clearly welcome others as peers
- Speaking from beside someone may feel safer than face to face
- Respect the need for solitude
- Start a chat about the present shared experience —like music, bonfire, weather
- "I'm glad you're here!"
- Notice and admire talents
- Sing or play a song that invites everyone in
- Be real & share vulnerabilities
- Areas of marginalization are sensitive - they are not conversation starters (ex. their age, size, trans-ness, wheelchair, service dog, hair/skin, accent)

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Elder Belonging

Elders:

- Thank you for being here!
- Where can you contribute most?
- It's helpful to ask for help
- Keep learning! (elder vs. older)
- "Fresh words" incorporate stories
- If you forget someone's name, ask
 - Even if you really know them!
- Take your time
- Share aging realities with youngers

Everyone Else:

- Elders are fully human and vital!
- The person your age is STILL THERE
- Make eye contact, nod, & say hi
- Slow down & speak clearly
- Be curious & take time to listen
- Ask for help & advice
- Touch! Hold hands, backrub, etc.
- Observe for signs of discomfort
- Offer support (see next page)

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Elder Supports

- Non-standing conversation spots
- Canes
- Skip lines (meals, bathroom)
- Toilets close by
- Chairs
- Wide chairs
- Seat pads
- Transit at large events
- Information booth
- Clear map
- Closer camping
- Raised sleeping platforms
- Indoor sleeping options
- Microphone or sitting close to presenter
- Captions on digital offerings

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Supporting Folks with Kids at the Gathering

- “Including” kids or do they belong?
- Make it clear: we're glad you're here!
- Offer
 - hugs
 - to bring water or food
 - to sit with a child if the parent needs a moment
 - to save a space for them
 - support in advance -- follow through
- Co-regulate by breathing with your whole body
- Be patient with distracted conversation
- Be considerate in quiet hours
- Invite to things
 - Make it easy to say no
 - They may need REST
- Volunteer in a kid space
- Multiple marginalized identities can increase isolation/barriers/emotional labor
- Presenters may also have kids!

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KINSHIP TENDING SKILLS:

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Session 2

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Agenda

Intro:

- Grounding
- Song
- What is Kinship Tending?

Exploring through the lenses of:

- All Participants
- Kinship Tending Team
- Kinship Tending Team Coordinators

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Children: What Guardians Can Do

- Before Arrival
 - “Our” event (not just for grownups)
 - Prepare for sensory experiences
 - Practice a calming song at home
- Create Visual/Tactile Familiarity
 - Bring a grounding object
 - Decorate name badge or bracelet
- Help Them Form Pods
- Give Them a Job or Role
- Practice Consent
- Name Needs As Normal
- Involve Them in Song or Ritual
 - Let them drum, rattle, hum, light something, or help lead a kid-friendly chant
- Safety monitoring

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Children: What Friends of Guardians Can Do

- Conversations:
 - Greet kids directly and respectfully
 - Express delight
 - Don't ignore the parent!
 - Open, respectful questions:
- Offer kid-wise invitations
 - Happy smile, open body language
 - Make it easy to opt out, without shame
- Consent
 - Parents (family norms level)
 - Child (personal enthusiastic yes)
- Co-Regulate Through Presence
 - Parallel play
 - Calm energy
 - Don't need to jump in to fix
 - Be ready to receive connection with eye contact and understanding
- Safety monitoring

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Young Adults: What Guardians Can Do

- See teens as co-creators
 - "What do you want to do / explore?"
 - Ask what would make them feel like they're part of things
 - Make a plan together for phones
 - You follow the plan too!
- Practice 'We-tonomy'
 - Check in gently: "Do you want to do this together, or solo it for a bit?"
 - Be easy to find
 - Connect them to grounding tools
- Normalize awkwardness
- Savor the good stuff!
- Support identity expression
 - Celebrate dress, style, gender expression, or social groupings
 - Only they know what feels authentic
- Ask: "What feels good/off about this space?"
 - Value their response
 - Invite them to share with Kinship Tending team or even join the team
- Safety monitoring

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Young Adults What Community Can Do

- Other YA - reassure each other about belonging
- Greet Without Pressure
 - Express delight!
 - Dignity, eye contact, and full attention
 - Avoid quizzing & school talk
 - Ask about art, passions, or comfort levels
- Be authentic
 - Teens see through pretense
 - Show the gathering welcomes realness
 - If it doesn't, explore why/how
 - Great chance to learn about yourself!
- Offer/explore ways to contribute
 - Roles that matter
 - May need check-ins & reminding
 - Option to help, perform, or lead
 - Let "no" be okay
 - Respect consent and mood shifts
- See them!
 - Strengths, uniqueness, and growth
 - Gifts, contributions, & presence
 - Does the community have coming of age rituals?
- Safety monitoring

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Liberate Your View of Beauty

- The spark of life is what's truly attractive! Feel for it!
- True beauty shines with loving presence
- Slow down to notice gestures, textures, expressions, voice, gaze, depth, presence, or way of listening
- Beauty norms are linked to other forms of oppression
 - Distancing up, out, and down are all othering
 - "Pretty" ~~people~~ get unspoken priority— trust, attention, and access
 - Harmful if you fit the standard, too:
 - Pressure to maintain appearance, may doubt worth beyond looks, or struggle to be truly seen
 - Isolating and objectifying, belonging is conditional

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Where Can You Shift Out of Ranking Mindset?

- Body size/shape/height
- Skin color and tone
- Age
- Disability and physical ability
- Gender expression and identity
- Facial features and symmetry
- Hair texture and style
- Clothing, grooming associated with class & culture
- Cultural or ethnic markers
- Scars, marks, or differences from medical norms

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Bonded Units at Gatherings

- Pay Attention to the Group
 - Distressed (or happy) couples or polycules affect everyone
 - Pro-active care is easier than rupture repair
 - How can you tend the greater kinship web?
- Take Care of Your People
 - Check in often
 - Help each other feel grounded & welcome
 - Discuss needs: time together, time apart, helpful support
 - Help each other make/maintain friendships
- The Group Can Help Too
 - Make room for quiet moments, reconnection, or healing
 - Respect people's boundaries and relationships
 - Don't always focus on couples or pods—and don't leave them out either

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How Do Social Nutrients Flow?

- People thrive in the right conditions
- Kinship tending is relational, quiet, and alive — nourishing the ecosystem in all directions
- Support travels through the web of relationships
- Say people's names in spaces of care — this helps others notice, ~~reaction~~ or make space
- Grateful? Impressed? Tell others too
- Small acts help us all get seen, supported — and called into offering our gifts to the whole

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Bringing Your Gifts

Contributing grows your sense of belonging

- Tune in to the 'field' to see where you can support flow
- Subtly weave in art and decoration
- Speak up productively & kindly (track your motivation)
- Volunteer in some official way

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Drugs, substances, and other altered states

- Can give a false sense of connection and consent
 - Consent for touch
 - Consent for deep conversation—especially if altered
- Alcohol/drugs allowed/welcome at the gathering? If so...
 - Create a care pod to look out for each other
 - Need support? Ask and be clear if you're in an altered state
 - Plant medicine ritual spaces - tend to belonging with great care
 - Drug-heavy festivals:
 - It's still great to be sober!
 - There is usually a care team for bad trips, like Whitebird Rock Medicine

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Event Aftercare

- Grief is normal (emotional 'hangover')
 - Consider volunteering for the take-down crew
 - Create memory portals
 - Songs
 - Mementos
 - Connecting to something in your daily routine
- Give yourself time to sleep and land
- Reach to grow + friends' belonging in the coming days and weeks -
 - Default world may not be as kind
 - Especially for marginalized folks
- Reach for support, too
 - Write a note from the gathering to Future You
 - Friends (new and old), therapist, journal, dogs, etc.

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Lens 2: Kinship Tending Teams

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Kinship Tenders

Tend to everyone's sense of belonging to increase kinship tending capacity

- Nourish adaptive attachment
 - Help regulate our interwoven nervous systems
 - Help people get to know each other
 - Facilitate social learning

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(Adaptive Attachment – Gaskins, et., al 2017, Keller, 2021)

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What the Kinship Tending Team Does

- Model kinship tending skills:
 - Listening, noticing, seeing people
 - Caring & reassure people they belong
 - Helping people get to know each other
 - Learning out loud
 - Staying heart-centered
- Liberation
 - Observe “How is this for you?”
 - Is it safe enough yet for everyone to be authentic?
 - Where is more consideration needed?
 - Help coordinators notice structural barriers

"Nobody's Free Until Everybody's Free" - Fannie Lou Hamer

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Who feels left out
of the goodness?

Nobody belongs until everybody
belongs!

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A few of our "Services"



Talking/Witnessing



Skills & Regulation



Conflict as Healing



Pocket Songs

(This is what we do at
Cascadia Song Rise in
Oregon)

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Roles at Camp

You can do more than one of these.

- 1 On-Call Shift (morning, afternoon, evening)**
- 2 Affinity Group Tender**
- 3 Rejuvenation Station Shift**
- 4 Affinity Group Educator**

(This is what we do at Cascadia Song Rise in Oregon)

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Other Support

Tend to the edges
Attune to the “field”
Make space/time for grief
Encourage gift expression
Encourage kinship tending
Anticipate to prevent harm

“Fresh words”
Help integrate learning
Develop eldering skills
Aftercare
Systemic liberation

(This is what we do at
Cascadia Song Rise in
Oregon)

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Welcome to the Rejuvenation Station!

Intention: A space to soothe your nervous system and get resourced.
You belong, and your rest and recuperation helps us all!

- Home station for the Kinship Tenders
- Interact and play with any objects here!
- Spinners have no rules and are made from the bones of trees (sourced responsibly). Spinners are oddly satisfying and grounding.
- You are welcome to carry Spinners away, just please bring them back and keep them clean.
- Please supervise children, as these are sacred objects that may need protecting.

(This is what we do at Cascadia Song Rise in Oregon)

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Look for Potential Kinship Tenders

- Could become a KT right away (if qualified)
 - For next time?
 - Introduce to the KTT coordinator
 - Diversity helps really see & meet community well
- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Race | • Religion & Spirituality | • Parenting experience |
| • Indigeneity | • Gender | • Partnership style/status |
| • Age | • Gender Expression | • Community role |
| • Class | • Neurotype | • Status |
| • Size | • Sexual Orientation | ◦ In community |
| • Ability | • National origin | ◦ In outer world |
| • Beauty Standard | • Introvert/extrovert | |

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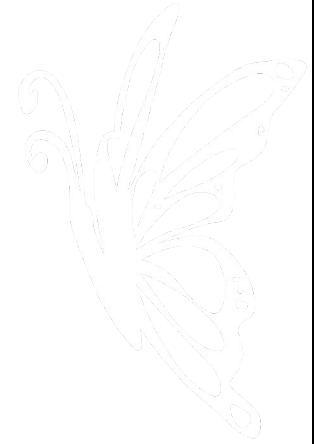
Agenda

Intro:

- Grounding
- What to do going forward?

Exploring through the lenses of:

- Kinship Tending Team
- Kinship Tending Team Coordinators



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Some Phrases to Model & Normalize

- | | |
|---|---|
| • I care about... | • Can I offer any support? |
| • My body/nervous system/inner child needs... | • What's your best case scenario for this? |
| • Part of me feels that... | • Here's what I'm hearing, Is that what you meant? |
| • How can I help? | • Can you say more? |
| • Sanctuary symbol | • I'm listening |
| • What do you need? | • I'd like to circle back... |
| | • I'd like to rephrase that, I've been removing the word "XXXXX" from my vocabulary |

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Some Behaviors to Model & Normalize

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Expressing admiration & gratitude | • Making introductions |
| • Pausing a conversation to be present | • Returning to your senses |
| • Rephrasing idioms rooted in colonialism/violence/ capitalism | • Apologizing |
| ◦ Trying again | • Checking for consent (touch, conversation, deep conversation, joining a group) |
| ◦ Without shame | • Tracking your needs, too |
| • Exploring nuanced understanding | ◦ Taking your time to consider something before saying yes |
| • Finding common ground | ◦ Saying no to opportunities |
| • Slowing down to savor experiences | ◦ Asking for what you need |
| • Shifting out of a punishment lens | |

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Songs for Kinship Tending

- Co-regulate (share the vibe)
- Teach kinship tending skills
- Sing to individuals or small groups
- More songs in the online course player

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Coordinating Between Kinship Tenders

- Daily check-in meeting at event?
 - 2-way radio to coordinators at R&R
 - Spot for notes to coordinators at R&R
- Share to Kinship Tenders in the next shift
 - Who might need extra care
 - Upcoming potential problems
 - Joyful comments & love
 - Anything else useful

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Tending to Your Own Belonging

- Know which role suits you
 - Stretch yourself (but know your limits)
 - If you don't feel safe holding space for everyone, let a coordinator know so you can support where you feel warmth
- Need to be extra resourced to be a Kinship Tender
 - Rest & hydrate!
 - Let that FOMO go!
 - Buddy system - plan someone to go to for grounding
 - Ask another Kinship Tender for help
 - Swap shifts with another kinship tender if you're drained

Recommended! [Beyond Inclusion, Beyond Embodiment: A Developmental Strategy to Liberate Everyone](#)
by Leticia Nieto with Margot F. Boyer, Liz Goodwin, Garth R. Johnson & Laurel Collier Smith

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Get Ready for Your Gathering

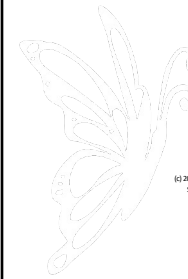
- If you're not on a Kinship Tending team yet, reach out!
- Expect a meeting before gathering with event-specific details
- Helpful to watch this full course

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Lens 3: Kinship Tending Team Coordinators

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Kinship Tending Umbrella

- Floating
 - Belonging Pollinators
 - Conflict Resolution
 - Affinity Group Educators
 - Access Coordinator
- Physical Sanctuary Spaces
 - Affinity groups (BIPOC/PGM, LGBTQIA+, Disabled, Neurodivergent, Elders, Kids,...)
 - Rest & Rejuvenation
 - Trip Tenders if psychedelics are a thing

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What Do KTT Coordinators Bottom-line?

- Stay aware of belonging throughout
 - Before event (website, marketing, programming, planning meetings, etc.)
 - Trauma track the field & collaborate with event coordinator for systems changes
 - Have a plan for conflict and Big Harm
- Assemble the team (more on that later)
- Plan sanctuary spaces
 - Set-up Crew
 - Breakdown Crew
 - Coordinate item bringing
- Ensure there is Signage
 - At sanctuary spaces
 - Around gathering
 - Leading up to gathering
- Connect attendees to Kinship Tending team (intros, signage, emails, etc.)

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More Coordination Tasks

- Choose structure: Example pairs on duty at all times w/one on duty at R&R station, etc.
- Something to identify Kinship Tenders (hat/necklace, sticker, etc.)
- Recruit the team
- Help plan/run:
 - Orientation before the event
 - On-site orientation for the team
 - Announcement of kinship tenders on duty (could be a sign)
 - Team meetings & point of contact during event
 - Debrief / closing for kinship tenders
 - Debrief KT and others afterwards - online or in-person

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Reciprocity & Responsibility

Plan in advance:

- Are Kinship Team Coordinators work-trade or paid?
- Is it a team or one person bottom-lining?
- Circular leadership or hierarchical?
- What exactly are your duties at this specific event?
- If volunteering is required* at the gathering: Are kinship tenders volunteers or is it a joyful role?

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KTT Assembly Tips from Cascadia Song Rise

- 10% of event population
 - Take diversity into account
 - Beware of onlies & tokenizing
- Get most of the team in advance
- Open-door policy
 - Less exclusive
 - Risky? No orientation + you may not have referrals
 - Can pair with experience tender
 - Conflict transformation & sensitive areas - more vetting
 - Helpful for adding missing perspectives

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Criteria / Helpful Experience

- People who can listen well without jumping too fast to problem-solving
- Grounded people with healthy boundaries who like to offer hugs
- Grandparents & Elders
- Early childhood teachers
- Co-counselors
- Touch Activists
- Therapists & social workers
- Ritualists
- Conflict transformation artists
- Somatic practitioners, bodyworkers
- Other space-holders

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Rest & Rejuvenation Station

- Connect to others in a welcoming space
- Settle bodies and minds
- Make friends in deeper conversation
- Especially helpful for anyone needing a clear welcome space to socialize
- Cultural signal:
 - Slowness is welcome here
 - “Doing nothing” and “needing space” are part of being in the village
- Additional tent or space: quiet, 1-1 with tender, or conflict resolution

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R&R - Objects and Structure

- Decoration: welcoming, cozy, and playful for adults
- Objects to interact with:
 - Tactile: Fidgets & grounding objects, smooth stones, coloring books, soft things
 - Oracle cards, conversation cards
 - Helpful books & reading glasses
 - Stimulation reducers: earplugs, eye masks, low lighting, scent neutral
- Squish, seating, space to lie down, hammocks, couches. Info Posters / booklet ([printable booklet](#) we use at Cascadia Song Rise)
- Objects of a culture indicate your space is an informed sanctuary space for the people of that culture (*are you?*)
- Location: accessible, yet out of the way (visibly and sonically)

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Sanctuary Space Signage

- Makes it clear what the space is for (and not for)
- Varies by event & whether it's R&R or affinity space
- "Red carpet" of welcome
- Can include practices and affirmations
- Can include symbols like peace, progressive pride flag, BLM, pan-African flag (red/black/green)
- If you have affinity spaces and the main R&R, coordinate on what goes where so it's clear

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PGM/BIPOC Sanctuary Spaces

- Grounding and connection for Black, Indigenous, and People of the Global Majority
- This space helps PGM root in belonging — to show up fully, lead creatively, and co-create the gathering from a grounded place
- What helps it thrive:
 - Clear boundaries – For PGM only; rest from code-switching & explanation
 - Location – Shaded, quiet, near but not central; not on display
 - Nervous system care – Soft textures, tea, altars, breath, body rituals
 - Multiple needs welcome – Space for solitude and connection
 - Emotional honesty – Grief, rage, joy, rest, and complexity all have room
 - Intersectional & inclusive – Honors all PGM identities (queer, disabled, etc.)

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"I have a vision of social movement as sanctuary.
Not a tiny perfectionist utopia behind miles of barbed wire
and walls and fences and tests and judgments and
righteousness.

But a vast sanctuary where our experiences as humans
who have experienced and caused harm are met with
centered grounded invitations to grow."

- adrienne maree brown

Source: We Will Not Cancel Us: And other dreams of transformative justice

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What to Do If Big Harm Happens

- How can we protect while holding the possibility of future participation for folks who have done harm?
- What facilitates community healing and learning?
- How do we build systems that make Big Harm less likely in the first place?
- How can this moment of rupture make us resilient, tender, and more connected?

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1. Prioritize safety first--gently but clearly.

- Gently, but clearly
- If someone's behavior is harming others (even unintentionally), we must intervene quickly and kindly
- Can separate someone from the space without shaming them
- Boundaries are part of kinship
- "Right now, we need to pause your participation to protect others' safety."



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2. Practice Accountability. Not Exile

- Let them know why their behavior isn't okay
- Invite reflection
- Use compassionate curiosity, not punitive force
- Specific Kinship Tender or support person to check in, listen, and model growth
- "We care about you. This isn't goodbye – it's a pause with care, and a path to reconnecting"
- Community Accountability: is there healing/support needed for this community member or their whole identity group to choose healthier behavior?

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3. Offer a Process. Not a Punishment

- Is there a clear pathway back in?
- It might include:
 - A conversation with Kinship Tenders or elders
 - Agreements about future behavior
 - Learning or support resources
 - A restorative circle (if safe and appropriate)
- This signals: "We believe in your capacity to grow."
- Community: What need did this harmful behavior meet?
- What socialization practices or cultural changes can be made to make this harm less likely in the future?





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4. Design the System Before the Crisis

- Normalize repair work for small ruptures
 - Ouch - Thank You, for example
- Have a clear, visible protocol for harm + repair before the gathering begins
- Let people know:
 - Who to go to if they feel unsafe
 - What the care/response process looks like
 - That both survivors and those causing harm will be held with dignity


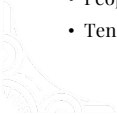
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Tending the Roots

- "Does this choice strengthen our capacity for truth-telling, transformation, and mutual care?"
- Conflicts reveal deeper patterns — cultural, systemic, generational
- People take these skills home with them
- Tend the relational soil — early, often, and for everyone!



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KINSHIP TENDING SKILLS:

How You Can Contribute to a Culture of Belonging

Festival & Gatherings Edition

Next Lens: Presenters

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